



Embassy of the United States of America

American Citizen Services
24 Grosvenor Square
London, W1A 2LQ

ENTRY INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM

The U.S. Embassy in London is contacted every day by American citizens who have been refused entry into the United Kingdom, many of them because they did not acquire the appropriate entry clearance – commonly referred to as a visa – before traveling.

Entry into the United Kingdom by foreign nationals, including American citizens, is regulated by the UK Border Agency (UKBA). **If you are coming to the United Kingdom for any purpose other than a tourist or business visit of less than six months in duration, you must have a visa prior to your arrival at a UK port of entry.** American citizens should consult the UKBA website at <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/> for information about UK visa and entry regulations and requirements.

You must apply for a visa online at <http://visa4uk.fco.gov.uk/> via a commercial service contracted by the UKBA and the British Consulates General in the United States. More information is available on the British Embassy's website at <http://ukinusa.fco.gov.uk/en>. The UK visa application wizard can be found at: <http://www.ukvisas.gov.uk/en/howtoapply/wheretosapply/unitedstates>.

The United Kingdom has very specific definitions of tourism and business. Interns (paid or unpaid), students, prospective students, spouses, parents, fiancés/partners, charity and religious workers, those coming to the United Kingdom to work (unpaid or paid), those coming to the United Kingdom to marry, and all dependents in the preceding categories require a visa irrespective of duration of stay.

Students and prospective students who intend to stay longer than six months, and those coming for less than six months but who wish to work or take an internship while studying, are required to obtain a student or prospective student visa in advance of traveling to the United Kingdom. Failure to do so will result in the student or prospective student being refused entry to the United Kingdom. Information for students and prospective students is available on the UKBA website at <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/studyingintheuk/>.

Charity workers and religious workers, even those performing unpaid duties, also are required to obtain a visa prior to traveling to the United Kingdom. For more information, see the UKBA website at <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/workingintheuk/tier5/>.

Travelers or sponsors with any questions about UK visa requirements should consult the UKBA website at <http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/>.

Travelers must be outside the United Kingdom, the Channel Islands, and the Isle of Man when they make an application for a visa.

It is the traveler's personal responsibility to ensure that he/she has the appropriate permission to enter the United Kingdom. If you do not have the required visa, you will be refused entry to the United Kingdom. You risk being held in an immigration removal center until a return flight becomes available, and you may be returned to the country from where you arrived, not necessarily the United States. The U.S. Embassy in London cannot intervene in such matters.

If you need professional assistance from qualified UK immigration practitioners, you may wish to contact:

UK Immigrants Advisory Service (UKIAS)
<http://www.iasuk.org>

Office of Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC)
<http://www.oisc.gov.uk>

Under the provisions of the Immigration (Biometric Registration) Regulations 2008, the UKBA also has begun mandatory issuance of identity cards to American citizens who apply for an extension of their stay in the United Kingdom as students or as the husbands, wives, or partners of permanent residents. Further information regarding UK identity cards for foreign nationals is available at <http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/while-in-uk/do-i-need-id-card/>.